

Examiner's Amendment

PATENT

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PROPHYLACTIC SYSTEMS FOR DENTAL INSTRUMENTS

AND METHODS FOR USING THE SAME

9/28/2004
This application is a continuation of application Serial Number 09/426,219, filed October 22, 1999, now U.S. Patent 6,350,124.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates in general to dental instruments and in particular to a prophylactic system for dental instruments and methods for making the same.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

In recent years, the various health professions have come under close scrutiny due to the increased possibility of the transmission of infectious diseases from doctor to patient, patient to doctor, and patient to patient. This is particularly true in the dental office, where dental appliances come in direct contact with potentially harmful fluids or blood-borne pathogens, such as Hepatitis B and HIV, found within the oral cavity. With the predicted increase in the number of cases of infection with the Hepatitis B and HIV viruses, dentists will be treating more patients carrying these infections, knowingly or unknowingly. Consequently, the possibility of accidental transmission of these dangerous infectious diseases will correspondingly increase.

One particular path of pathogen transmission within the dental office is through the high speed and low speed air-driven dental hand pieces. These appliances come in direct contact with the patient's oral cavity during use and